



Visa lodgement and processing arrangements for clients from Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba

Clients applying for the following visa applications from Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba will be lodged and processed at the Australian High Commission in Ottawa, Canada from 1 August 2011.

- **Student visas:** A student visa application can be lodged online for Assessment Level 1 (AL1) students.

To check your eligibility to lodge your student visa application online.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/student-visa-assessment-levels.htm

The online service provides easy and secure access to lodge a visa application.

See: www.immi.gov.au/e-visa/students.htm

Note: Paper based applications lodged using form 157A and form 157G should be lodged in Ottawa.

- **Permanent entry visas:** Permanent visa applications currently lodged in Washington (except general skilled, business skills, Distinguished Talent (subclass 124), Former Resident (subclass 151) and parent subclasses) will now be lodged in Ottawa.
- **Citizenship:** Citizenship applications and evidentiary certificates (except Citizenship by Conferral, Renunciation and Resumption) should be lodged in Ottawa.
- **Temporary entry visas:** Temporary entry visas except those lodged in Australia and those listed below should be lodged in Ottawa.

The following visas will continue to be lodged and processed in Mexico City:

- Business Short Stay (subclass 456)
- Medical Treatment Short Stay (subclass 675)
- Tourist (subclass 676)
- Medical Treatment Long Stay (subclass 685)
- Transit (subclass 771).

Applications lodged in Ottawa after 1 August 2011

Lodging an application

Applications for visas lodged in Ottawa should be posted or couriered to:

Australian High Commission
Suite 710, 50 O'Connor Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 6L2
Canada

Payment

Information on how to pay visa application charges in Ottawa is available on the department's website.

See: www.immi.gov.au/allforms/990i/methods-of-payment.htm

For information on application charges, please refer to the 'Charges' form.

See: www.immi.gov.au/allforms/pdf/990i.pdf

To obtain the equivalent amount in another currency, please use the Currency Converter.

See: www.immi.gov.au/allforms/990i/converter.htm

Documents

All visa applications must include certified copies of original documents. Passports should not be sent with the visa application unless requested by the department except for student visa applications. Copies must be certified by a Notary Public.

Exception: For student visa applications, original passports must be included with the application along with the certified copies of original documents.

Documents in languages other than English must be accompanied by accredited English translations.

Return of documents

The department may return passports by courier (Federal Express or DHL only). Otherwise passports and other original documents can be returned by post.

Note: Clients in Cuba can only make arrangements with DHL. Family members or friends outside of Cuba can also help the applicant with arrangements.

Details on courier processes are listed in the Frequently Asked Questions page below.

Contact details for applications lodged in Ottawa

Before an application is lodged

For more information about lodging your application in Ottawa:

- visit the Australian High Commission Ottawa's website or the department's website

See:

www.canada.embassy.gov.au

www.immi.gov.au

- contact the Ottawa Service Centre

Telephone: 1 905 280 1437

Note: International call costs apply Services available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

- contact the department by email

See: www.immi.gov.au/contacts/forms/americas/

After an application is lodged

For information on the progress of applications

See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/about/charters/client-services-charter/standards/2.1.htm>

Telephone: 1 905 280 1437 (international call costs to Canada apply)

Note: International call costs apply Services available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

Email: www.immi.gov.au/contacts/forms/americas/

Information on the progress of your student visa application lodged online.

See: www.immi.gov.au/e_visas/check-progress.htm

Frequently asked questions - Changes to visa lodgement and processing arrangements for clients from Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Cuba

Where should I lodge my temporary residence visa application?

You can lodge your offshore temporary residence visa application at the Australian High Commission in Ottawa. You should send your completed application directly to:

Australian High Commission
Suite 710, 50 O'Connor Street
Ottawa, Ontario, K1P6L2
Canada

Will I need to go to the Ottawa office?

No. The Ottawa office will contact you if an interview is required, which may take place at the office closest to where you are living.

What documents should I lodge with my paper visa application

For information on supporting documents required for a paper visa application, visit the Australian High Commission Ottawa's website or the department's website.

See:

www.canada.embassy.gov.au

www.immi.gov.au

You will also need to ensure that you provide the appropriate payment with your application.

Information on how to pay visa application charges in Ottawa is available.

See: www.immi.gov.au/allforms/990i/methods-of-payment.htm

You should ensure that you lodge a complete visa application. A decision may be made based on the information you provide with your application. Applications that are complete are likely to be processed more quickly.

Documents in languages other than English must be accompanied by accredited English translations.

If you are asked to provide additional supporting documents, the Australian High Commission in Ottawa will advise you how to submit the additional information.

Should I send my original passport?

For student visa applications, original passports must be included with the application. Certified copies of other original documents must be provided. Copies must be certified by a Notary Public.

For all other visa applications passports should not be sent with the visa application unless requested by the department. Certified copies of original documents, including passports, must be provided. Copies must be certified by a Notary Public.

Documents in languages other than English must be accompanied by accredited English translations.

Who can provide an accredited translation of my documents?

Documents provided as part of a visa application in languages other than English must also be accompanied by an accurate English translation. If you are applying for your visa from outside Australia, and are having documents translated outside Australia, it is recommended that you use a professionally qualified translator.

Who can certify copies of my documents?

A certified document is a photocopy of an original document which has been notarised as a true copy of an original. Please note that the document must be certified by someone authorised to do so such as a Justice of the Peace, Commissioner of Oaths or Notary Public. Most lawyers/solicitors also have the ability to notarise/witness documents. In Mexico, 'notarios publicos' are able to certify copies.

What is the process for returning documents?

The department may return passports by courier (Federal Express or DHL only) or post.

Federal Express (FEDEX)

You must provide the account number and the account holder's name. If you are using a third party's account number, you must provide that party's written and signed authorisation to charge the courier costs to their account.

If you do not have an account, you must open one and provide the requested details with your application. Please note the following:

1. You are to indicate that you wish to open a 'Personal' account.
2. The account must be associated to a valid credit card that is in the name of the person opening the courier account.
3. The account must be valid for delivery/import into the country of destination.
4. You should indicate that "original documents" are being shipped.
5. You must provide a street address for delivery as FEDEX will not deliver to PO boxes.

DHL

If you already have an account with DHL, please provide your account number and the account holder's name. The account number must begin with '95' or '96', which indicate an international account. If you are using a third party's account number, you must provide that party's written and signed authorisation to charge the courier costs to their account.

If you do not have an account with DHL but would like your documents returned by DHL, you must indicate this on a covering note to accompany your visa application. When your documents are ready for pick up, the Ottawa office will contact you (by email in the first instance) to advise you that your documents are ready to be returned to you and that you should now arrange for DHL to pick up the package.

To arrange pickup, you should contact your local DHL office (either in person in their office or calling their customer service line. Visit the DHL website for the number of your closest DHL

office.

See: www.dhl.com

You will be asked to provide the following:

1. Details as to where the package is to be picked up. Provide the complete Ottawa office address and your case officer's contact details.
2. Details as to where the package is to be delivered (for example, your address).
3. Details on what is being picked up. Please mention if original documents are being picked up.
4. A valid credit card that will be used to charge the courier costs.

DHL Canada will arrange for a dispatcher to pick up the package.

Note: If you are unable to open a Personal account, you may be able to make prepaid arrangements with DHL. However, you will still need to provide the account number and account holder's name pertaining to the prepaid arrangement.

Post

You must provide a written and signed authorisation for the department to return your passports and other original documents by regular mail. If you choose this option, the department will not be able to track the progress of the delivery of your passports and documents.

How can I check the progress of my application?

You can contact the department by phone on or by email to check the progress of your application.

Telephone: 1 905 280 1437

Note: International call costs apply Services available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

See: www.immi.gov.au/contacts/forms/americas/

How will I know when an application has been decided?

When a decision has been made, the department will write to the contact given in your visa application.

You can contact the Australian High Commission in Ottawa by email or phone.

Telephone: 1 905 280 1437

Note: International call costs apply Services available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.

See: www.immi.gov.au/contacts/forms/americas/

Why have lodgement and processing arrangements changed?

Consolidating the processing of certain visas will allow the department to improve its client service performance, improve the consistency in decisions and deliver services more efficiently and effectively.

How do I contact the department?

You can contact the department either by email, phone or in person. The department encourages you to visit the department's website.

See: www.immi.gov.au

Where should I lodge my student visa application

A student visa application can be lodged online for Assessment Level 1 students.

To check your eligibility to lodge online

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/student-visa-assessment-levels.htm

The online service provides easy and secure access to lodge a visa application. For access to this service.

See: www.immi.gov.au/e-visa/students.htm

Applications not eligible for online lodgement should send their paper visa applications (form 157A or 157G or 157P) directly to the Australian High Commission in Ottawa, Canada.

Why lodge a student visa application online?

The department has a range of online services which provide easy and secure access. This will ensure there are no delays in the processing of the application.

The online service includes information on the visa options available for clients seeking to study in Australia. It also provides links to other organisations that may be able to provide support while you are studying in Australia.

You can check the status of online visa applications 24 hours a day using the department's online services. See the department's website for more information on the progress of your visa application lodged online.

See: <http://www.immi.gov.au/e-visa/check-progress.htm>

For more information visit the department's website.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/

Does an online student visa application cost more than a paper application?

No. Online and paper student visa applications attract the same fee.

What documents should I provide with my online student visa application?

See the checklist for information on what supporting documents are required for a student visa application.

See: www.immi.gov.au/students/checklists/

You should ensure that you lodge a complete visa application. A decision may be made on the basis of the information provided with your application.

You should attach supporting documents when you are lodging your online application. You can attach supporting documents to your online application before a decision has been made.

For more information on how to attach documents to the online application

See: www.immi.gov.au/e-visa/students-attachments.htm

How can I check the progress of an online visa application?

For more information on the progress of your visa application lodged online

See: http://www.immi.gov.au/e_visa/check-progress.htm